

AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWING

FIG. 1 has been amended to better illustrate the relationship between projections 57 and through bore 54.

A replacement sheet containing FIG. 1 has been attached hereto as Appendix A.

Appendix A: FIG.1

REMARKS

Reconsideration in light of the following amendments and remarks is respectfully requested.

Status of the Claims

Claims 1-18 are pending.

Claims 1 - 9 are allowed

Claims 10-18 are objected to.

Claims 10 - 18 have been amended. No new matter has been added.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants thank the Examiner for indicating that claims 1 - 9 are allowed.

Applicants also thank the Examiner for the indicating that claims 10-18 contain allowable subject matter, and would be allowable if amended to overcome the rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 112, 2nd paragraph.

Objections to the Drawing

Figures 1 and 3a of the drawing are objected to . Specifically, the Examiner finds that:

the free edge of the projection 57 in Figure 1 is visible such the free edge almost looks flush with the edge of the bore 23 and visible as compared to that shown in Figure 3a, which is not visible and flush with the bore. Given this difference, the projection, the plate body, the support portion, the shaft joint, the shaft joint body, and the recess are not the same ones and should be designated with different reference characters.

The intended relationship between the projections 57 and bore 23 are described, for example, at page 8, line 21 through page 9, line 3 of Applicants' specification:

The projection 57 is produced by cutting parallel two kerfs at four positions apart from each other in the circumferential direction of the through bore 54 and bending the partial pieces between the respective two kerfs inwardly in the plate thickness direction. When the supported portion 56 is supported between the joint portion 24 and the edge portion 33, the projection 57 cuts into the joint portion 24, and consequently a recessed portion 27 is formed in the joint portion.

Applicants provide a replacement drawing sheet revising FIG. 1 to better illustrate the above-described relationship. In revised FIG. 1 and current FIG. 3a, the projections 57a are illustrated as being partial pieces formed between paired kerfs that are arrayed around the through bore marked as element 54 in FIG. 1. Through bore 54 has approximately the same circumference as bore 23. The partial pieces are bent inwardly with respect to the through bore 54 to each form a recessed portion 27 in the joint portion 24.

Applicants assume that the Examiner's reference to a "free edge" is in regard to an edge of each partial portion that extends to the circumference of the through bore 54 prior to the inward bending of the partial pieces in the plate thickness direction. After bending, these free edges would necessarily lie near to but slightly outward from the circumference of the through bore 54. In FIG. 3a, this relationship is clearly shown among reference elements 57, 27 and 3 (which extends to the circumference of the through bore 54 of FIG. 1). FIG. 1 is revised to better illustrate this relationship. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the replacement drawing sheet including revised FIG. 1 be accepted, and that the objection to the drawing be withdrawn.

Objections to the Claims

Claims 10 and 12 are objected to for informalities. Upon review of the claims, it appears that the objection to claim 12 was intended to be directed instead to claim 10. Applicants amend claim 10 pursuant to the Examiner's suggestions, and amend claims 11 - 18 to better conform with amended claim 10. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the objections to claims 10 and 12 be withdrawn.

Amendment dated February 21, 2007

Reply to final Office Action dated January 3, 2007

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claims 10-17 are rejected under the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. § 112 as being indefinite. Specifically, the Examiner finds unclear whether the recitation of "a projection" in line 15 is in reference to "projections" recited in line 13. Applicants respectfully submit that the amendments made to claim 10 with regard to informalities clarify that the "projection" of line 15 is one of the "plurality of projections" recited in line 13. Accordingly, Applicants request that the rejection under the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. § 112 be withdrawn.

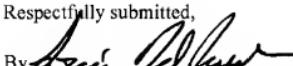
CONCLUSION

Each and every point raised in the final Office Action dated January 3, 2007 has been addressed on the basis of the above remarks. In view of the foregoing it is believed that claims 1-18 are in condition for allowance and it is respectfully requested that the application be reconsidered and that all pending claims be allowed and the case passed to issue. A prompt and favorable action in that regard is earnestly solicited.

If there are any other issues remaining which the Examiner believes could be resolved through a Supplemental Response or an Examiner's Amendment, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number indicated below

Dated: February 21, 2007

Respectfully submitted,

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